

further aspect, the contract may be identified and the contract associated with the item utilizing a network. In such an aspect, the network may include the Internet.

Bid Proposal Processing

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The proposal system has been designed to allow quick and easy creation of a generic proposal for any item(s) and supplier(s) within the Supply System. By centralizing the creation and storage of the data, an online record of all current and historical proposals is enabled. The proposal system is also tightly integrated with the Least Cost analysis system.

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The system is made up of two modules: data entry and reporting.

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Data Entry allows a user to enter or select all information for generating a complete proposal. Data Entry includes entering general proposal information (i.e. proposal name, buyer name, due date, contract begin date and end date), items, suppliers, restaurants served, usage information, selecting cost component templates, and updating Microsoft Word template documents. Most of the information above will be generated from data within the Supply System, but the system will allow the user to change some information when necessary.

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Reporting: After data has been entered, the proposal can be generated and printed. In the reporting module of the proposal process, a user can update specific documents for a supplier, print any of the reports included in the proposal, and/or generate the entire proposal.

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By following the flow of the tabs on the proposal window ¹²⁹⁰⁰~~12900~~ (see Figure ¹²⁹~~129~~), the user will be guided through the proposal process. When enough data is entered to continue on to the next step in the proposal process more tabs will be enabled. For example, when the user has completed entering information on the Main Info tab, the Items, Suppliers, DCs, and FOB Price tabs will become enabled.

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